

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHVL #1037/01 3211457
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 171457Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY VILNIUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0793
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 001037

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/17/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [EUN](#) [ENRG](#) [RS](#) [LH](#)
SUBJECT: LITHUANIAN FM MEETS WITH RUSSIAN FOREIGN,
TRANSPORT MINISTERS

REF: VILNIUS 1007

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Rebecca Dunham for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
)

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary. Lithuanian FM Vaitiekunas's discussions November 14 with Russia's Foreign and Transport Ministers in Moscow focused on positive areas of cooperation, like Kaliningrad policy and the EU-Russia PCA, as well as touchier subjects such as energy supply and neighborhood policy. Vaitiekunas sought to encourage future high-level dialogue about all issues, including sensitive topics. End Summary.

Lithuanian FM Meets Russia's Foreign, Transport Ministers

[¶2.](#) (C) Vaitiekunas talked about "all the issues" with Russia's Ministers during the November 14 Lithuanian-Russia Intergovernmental Commission, according to Head of the MFA's Russia/CIS Department Arunas Vinciunas, who accompanied the Minister on the trip. The hot topics were Kaliningrad, recent expulsions of diplomats from both Lithuania and Russia, and Russia's closure, ostensibly for repairs, of the Druzhba pipeline serving Lithuania's Maziekiu Nafta oil refinery. The Ministers also discussed the EU-Russia PCA agreement, gas supply to Georgia, and even "old issues" such as the return of Soviet-era bank deposits and the unsolved 1991 murder of seven Lithuanian border guards at Medininkai.

[¶3.](#) (C) Lithuania's goal was to encourage ongoing high-level engagement on a broad range of issues, said Vinciunas, not hammer away on trouble spots. Vaitiekunas told the Ambassador before the meeting that he would push Lavrov on "European values" on the one hand, while suggesting positive areas for cooperation on the other (reftel). Vaitiekunas raised Kaliningrad issues first, which Vinciunas called Lithuania's "trump card" with Russia. Vaitiekunas briefed Lavrov on Lithuania's efforts to keep the current no-fee visa arrangement for Kaliningrad residents following Lithuania's anticipated entry into the Schengen zone. The sides agreed on payment for the Kaliningrad-Lithuania border demarcation commission. They discussed existing arrangements to cooperate on transit issues and search and rescue operations in the Baltic Sea. Lithuania is urging Russia to have a Minister-level border demarcation ceremony next spring near Nida, a picturesque Lithuanian town near the Kaliningrad border on the Curonian spit. He said Levitin and Lavrov did not dismiss the idea.

Lavrov complains about diplomat's expulsion, Lahti reaction

[¶4.](#) (C) Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov took issue with Lithuania about "embarrassing" acts towards Russia, including the October expulsion of a Russian diplomat for spying and Lithuanian President Adamkus's characterization to the press of the informal EU-Russia Summit in Lahti. On the former,

Vinciunas told us that the MFA had not intended to embarrass Russia by expelling the Russian Embassy's First Secretary Oleg Ryabchikov in October. They wanted to expel him quietly, Vinciunas said, but failed to keep the incident from the press. Vinciunas added that the day after the Foreign Ministers met in Russia, Moscow expelled a Lithuanian diplomat who was planning to leave Moscow this week anyway. On Lahti, Lavrov reportedly said that Adamkus's statements to the press, presumably those in which he described the EU's "tough message" to Putin, "seemed designed to embarrass Russia."

Russia-EU PCA

15. (C) Lavrov raised the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), to which Lithuania had withdrawn its reservations at the GAERC the day before. Vinciunas refuted reports carried by ITAR TASS that Vaitiekunas made a statement in Moscow disapproving of Poland's decision to block a mandate for the EU-Russia PCA. Back in Vilnius, the FM issued a statement of solidarity with Poland regarding Russia's restrictions on trade and energy. Vinciunas told us Lithuania was sympathetic to Poland's decision even though Lithuania itself ultimately lifted its two reservations in exchange for language about energy supply in the PCA negotiating mandate. Vinciunas added that he thinks Poland's tactics backfired, and that he personally believed they would back down before the EU-Russia Summit November 24. Vinciunas said the GOL was pleased with the EU positions going into the November 24 EU-Russia Summit, saying that Lithuania suggested few changes to the papers and that all had been accepted.

Pipeline Woes

16. (C) Lavrov reportedly raised Russia's closure of the Druzhba pipeline which once delivered crude oil to Lithuania's Maziekių Nafta refinery. Vinciunas said Lavrov "incredibly swore the pipeline was closed only for technical reasons," and a technical evaluation in March 2007 would determine if the pressure could be increased enough to again deliver crude to Maziekių Nafta. Asked if he believed Lavrov, Vinciunas said, "no."

Georgia

17. (C) Vaitiekunas raised Lithuania's diplomacy with Georgia, emphasizing that the GOL has advised Georgia to de-escalate its rhetoric in seeking a solution with Russia. Lavrov "did not really reply" to the FM's comments on Georgia, Vinciunas said, except to say that raising the price of natural gas to Georgia was part of a greater policy change toward all its export markets.

Lithuania seeking future engagement

18. (C) The GOL plans to invite Lavrov to Lithuania in Spring 2007, perhaps to the proposed border demarcation ceremony at Nida. The Russian side seemed open to a border demarcation ceremony on the sidelines of another Intergovernmental Commission to take place in Kaliningrad, although Vinciunas said this is not yet agreed.

CLOUD